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DR. NABOKOV AND MR. THOREAU by Michael Delizia

Vladimir Nabokov was an ardent and meticulous naturalist, like Thoreau. And, like Thoreau, he was a libertarian of sorts. His wonderfully laconic prescription for the "ideal state" might almost have been written by Thoreau:

"Portraits of the head of the head of the government should not exceed a postage stamp in size." (Interview in Playboy magazine, quoted in Strong Opinions, New York, 1973.) Both men were confirmed non-joiners who prized their individuality, and the individuality of others, above all else. Both were brilliant prose stylists who worked and reworked their material until it literally came to life. A paragraph from the mature style of either writer can be mistaken for no one else's. And both were at their most vehemently contemptuous on the subjects of racial prejudice and cruelty. Nevertheless, the differences between these two great men are profound and, I suspect, irreconcilable.

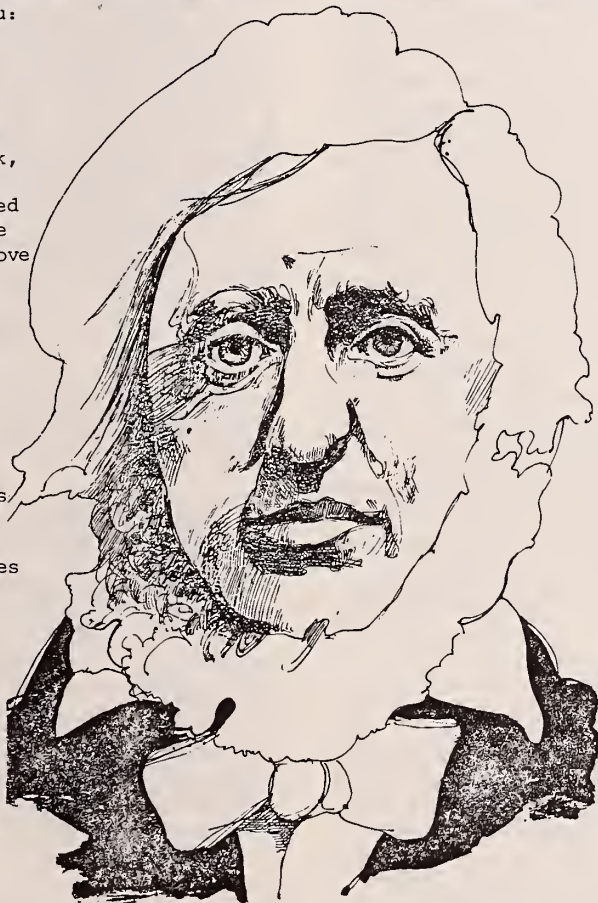
Any discussion of the handful of references to Thoreau in Nabokov's works must proceed with extreme caution, because Nabokov actually mentioned Thoreau by name only once, to my knowledge, in his published writings. The reference occurs in Nikolai Gogol (New York, 1944): "A

sympathetically pictured priest in the midst of the Gogolian characters of the first volume (of Dead Souls) would have been as utterly impossible as ... a quotation from Thoreau in Stalin's latest speech." I wonder whether even this seemingly direct statement might not have been meant to needle Nabokov's pro-Soviet literary or academic acquaintances of the period. "Utterly impossible" or not, Marxist admirers of Thoreau existed in considerable numbers in this country at one time. (In this case Nabokov's early friend and mentor Edmund Wilson comes to mind.) If the reference, as seems likely, is to Civil Disobedience, Nabokov must have read it in the early 1940's, when he was learning, as he tells us, to be an American writer.

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Paul Williams, Elmhurst, IL, president; Mrs. Charles MacPherson, Acton, Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding, State University, Geneseo, NY 14454, secretary-treasurer. Annual membership \$3.00; life membership, \$100.00. Address communication to the secretary.

There is evidence that he read, or started to read, Walden around that time as well, in a passage in the autobiographical Speak, Memory that is distinctly Thoreauvian in tone and contains a virtual quote from "Economy." In a meditation on the evolution of human consciousness, Nabokov writes: "There is also keen pleasure in meeting the riddle of the initial blossoming of man's mind by postulating a voluptuous pause in the growth of the rest of nature, a lolling and loafing which allowed first of all the formation of Homo poeticus - without which sapiens could not evolved. 'Struggle for life' indeed! The curse of battle and toil leads man back to the boar, to the grunting beast's crazy obsession with the search for food. ... I have frequently remarked upon that maniacal glint in a housewife's scheming eye as it roves over food in a grocery or about the morgue of a butcher's shop. Toilers of the world, disband! Old books are wrong. The world was made on a Sunday." (Speak, Memory, New York, 1966.)

The search for allusions in Nabokov's densely allusive prose is a tricky but rather enjoyable business. In the above passage, for example, there are references to Darwin ("struggle for life"), to Marx ("Workers of all lands, unite!"), and perhaps to Walt Whitman ("I lean and loaf ..."). Most intriguing to a Thoreauvian, the sentences "Old books are wrong. The world was made on a Sunday" are reminiscent of Thoreau's alluding in Walden to the Bible as "an old book," in a passage remarkably similar in tone and intent. "But men labor under a mistake," writes Thoreau, punningly. "The better part of a ran soon ploughed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life ..." Thoreau's irreverence is said to have shocked some of his fellow Concordians, but is the sort of thing Nabokov might have found attractive.



"Thoreau" by ED LINDLOF from MUTLU BLASING'S THE ART OF LIFE, Courtesy of Univ. of Texas Press

"The world was made on a Sunday" also resembles a sentence from one of Thoreau's student speeches: "The order of things should be somewhat reversed; the seventh should be man's day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and the other six his Sabbath of the affections ...". Nabokov's erudition is legendary. While the resemblance may be coincidental, it would be unwise to rule out the possibility that Nabokov had come across this quote somewhere in his reading. At the very least, it further demonstrates an interesting philosophical kinship between our two writers.

2.

Another allusion to Walden appears in the screenplay of Lolita that Nabokov wrote for Stanley Kubrick. At one point in the story, Lolita is to star in a school play called The Enchanted Hunters, by a hack named Clare Quilty. Quilty is Humbert Humbert's nemesis, with whom the "nymphet" Lolita is having an affair at the time of the play's production, unbeknownst to Humbert. We are not told much about the play, but we are given this excerpt: "I'll recite to you, hunter, a lullaby song about the mourning dove you lost when you were young." (Lolita: A Screenplay, New York, 1974, copyright © 1961 by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc.) This is an obvious reference to Thoreau's famous and mysterious "I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail." Nabokov found this sort of apparently referentless symbolism intensely annoying; Humbert Humbert, speaking, I am certain, for the author, considered Quilty's play to be pretentious rubbish. We are expected to chuckle over the above excerpt. Given the context, it is surely one of the most unexpected (and scandalous) references to the author of Walden ever to appear in print or on celluloid.

Our kindred spirits are coming to a parting of the ways. The irreparable break comes with Thoreau's statement that "I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life." Now, the phrase "simple and sincere" occurs more than once in Nabokov's books, and always in this context: "I automatically gave low marks when a student used the dreadful phrase 'sincere and simple' - 'Flaubert writes with a style which is always simple and sincere' - under the impression that this was the greatest compliment payable to prose or poetry. When I struck the phrase out, which I did with such rage in my pencil that it ripped the paper, the student complained that this is what teachers had always taught him: 'Art is simple, art is sincere.' Someday I must trace this vulgar absurdity to its source. A schoolmarm in Ohio? A progressive ass in New York? Because, of course, art at its greatest is fantastically deceitful and complex." (Playboy interview, cited above.)

Did Nabokov, deceitful as ever, know perfectly well that the source of this "vulgar absurdity" was Walden, page one? It should be evident from the above that he was familiar with Thoreau and had read at least the first few pages of Walden, where his references from Thoreau are to be found. While readers of Walden and students of Thoreau soon realize that the book is not quite as sincere, and not nearly as simple, as Thoreau might imply on page one, nothing can have been more odious to Nabokov, creator of intricately deceptive fictions, that to be required to give, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life. Whether or not he was consciously referring to Thoreau's remark, as, alas, I suspect he was, it is clear that the two writers were poles apart in this matter.

This is why I suspect Nabokov of ulterior motives when he contrasts Thoreau and Stalin. Nabokov, who left Russia for good at the outbreak of the revolution, was no admirer of Stalin's; but, apart from the distinct but rather limited correspondence of ideas mentioned above, he was certainly no admirer of Thoreau's.

3.

In his essay "Thoreau on the Benevolence of Nature" (TSB#140), Robert Francis wisely observes that for all his "exquisite precision" in noting and recording the phenomena of nature, Thoreau "did not specialize and so was not a professional." Vladimir Nabokov, on the other hand, was a professional who described several new species of butterflies, and was known to readers of the Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society as "Dr. Nabokov." Here, I suggest, lies the real reason for the temperamental gulf between the two writers. To use the slang of the taxonomists, Thoreau was a "lumper" while Nabokov was a notorious "splitter." For Nabokov, "the divine detail" was an end in itself, while for Thoreau it always pointed to some philosophical or moral end, some "higher law." These two types of temperament, the "lumper" and the "splitter," often have much to say to the world, but seldom have much to say to each other. In this instance, for me at least, it is a little like seeing my best friends quarrelling. Let us hope their ghosts have made it up.

9-22-53

9-22-53

These drawings are reproduced from Thoreau's Journal. If you wish to identify them, simply look up the journal entry for the date indicated in the numerals.

THE 1978 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1978 annual meeting will be held in Concord on Saturday July 15 with Paul Williams presiding. He will speak on Thoreau's influence on the American nature essay. Speaker of the Day will be Prof. Joel Porte of Harvard University. Caroline Moseley will present a gathering of Thoreau's favorite songs. Further details will be given in the spring bulletin.

The 1978 nominating committee will consist of Thomas Blanding, William Howarth and Carol Orr (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 08540), chairman. Suggestions for nominations should be sent to the chairman or may be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

9-22-53

9-22-53

PAUL WILLIAMS: A SELF-PORTRAIT

(This is the first of a series in which we are asking our society's presidents to introduce themselves with brief autobiographies.)

I had been keeping notebooks of outdoor observations for several years before my father suggested, when I was twelve, that I read Walden. Unfortunately, that was too early an exposure, and I never got through the "Economy" chapter.

However, when I returned to the book in college, I responded immediately to it. Further study of the transcendentalists in graduate school confirmed my interest, and resulted in Thoreau's being included in my dissertation on transcendental poetry.

A natural outgrowth of that period was joining the Thoreau Society, doing further research in the

period, and getting involved in the Princeton edition of Thoreau's works. In this capacity I have done editorial work on ms. volumes three and four of the journal and have done the indexes of the volumes so far published.

My current interest is in the relationship of Thoreau to the tradition of the American nature essay.



10-31-53

THOREAU ON THOUGHTS AND THINKING by William C. Harrison

Thoreau believed thoughts rather than events to be the epochs of life,¹ and his thoughts on thoughts and thinking appear throughout his writings. For him, a passing thought could excel any deed or even hope and become "the most glorious fact" of his experience. "The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked what I thought, and attended to my answer,"² he wrote in "Life without Principle." He found his own thoughts more unfamiliar and startling to him than anything else in his experience (I, 166). Decrying as foolishness men's concentration on accumulating material wealth, he asserted:

Our stock in life, our real estate, is that amount of thought which we have had, which we have thought out. . . . If you have ever done any work with these finest tools, the imagination and fancy and reason, it is a new creation, independent on the world, and a possession forever. You have laid up something against a rainy day. You have to that extent cleared the wilderness. (IX, 50)

He distinguished between vagrant thoughts, common to all, and thinking, which he understood, as had the great philosophers before him, constitutes the hardest kind of work. "No exercise implies more real manhood and vigor than joining thought to thought," Thoreau wrote. "You conquer fate by thought. . . . There is no more Herculean task than to think a thought about this life and then get it expressed." (X, 405)

In one of his many passages containing advice to writers (set down with himself in mind, clearly), he discussed the task of finding suitable themes:

It would be a truer discipline for the writer to take the least film of thought that floats in the twilight sky of his mind for his theme, about which he has scarcely one idea (that would be teaching his ideas how to shoot), faintest intimations, shadowiest subjects, make a lecture on this, by assiduity and attention get perchance two views of the same, increase a little the stock of knowledge, clear a new field instead of manuring the old; instead of making a lecture out of such obvious truths, hackneyed to the minds of all thinkers. We seek too soon to ally the perceptions of the mind to the experience of the hand, to prove our gossamer truths practical, to show their connection with our everyday life (better show their distance from our everyday life), to relate them to the cider-mill and the banking institution. Ah, give me pure mind, pure thought! Let me not be in haste to detect the universal law; let me see more clearly a particular instance of it! . . . Do not seek expressions, seek thoughts to be expressed. By perseverance you get two views of the same rare truth. (III, 156-57)

Thoreau described how he used his journal to help him sort out his thoughts:

To set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me and at last I may make wholes of parts. . . . Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing, of keeping a journal--that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected thoughts and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and to think. Thought beget thought. (III, 217)

He summarized the idea years later. "The more you have thought and written on a given theme, the more you can still write," he said. "Thought breeds thought. It grows under your hand." (XIII, 145) Sometimes, however, one needs respite from thinking. "It is fatal to the writer to be too much possessed by his thought," Thoreau said. "Things must lie a little remote to be described." (III, 107)

And thoughts want proper words to reveal the Man Thinking. "Shall I not have words as fresh as my thoughts?" Thoreau asked. "Shall I use any other man's word? A genuine thought or feeling can find expression for itself, if it have to invent hieroglyphics. It has the universe for type-metal. It is for want of original thought that one man's style is like another's." (II, 480) In 1860, nearing the end of his vigorous life, the Concord Saunterer penned a final caution on the subject in his journal. "A man thinks as well through his legs and arms as his brain," (XIII, 69) he wrote.

NOTES

¹The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau, ed. Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen, II-43 (1906; rpt. in 14 vols., Boston: Houghton Miffling, 1949), Therein after noted in the text by volume and page.

²Reform Papers, ed. Wendell Glick, p. 155 (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973).



11-3-53

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE THOREAU FAMILY'S SHEET MUSIC by Caroline Moseley

The Concord Free Public Library has in its archive a collection of sheet music belonging to the Thoreaus, and given to the library by Henry's sister, Sophia Thoreau. Some of this material is printed, and some is copied onto manuscript paper in what appears to be Sophia's hand. Sophia's name, or initials, are inscribed on several of the pieces. It is possible that she acquired some of this music after leaving Concord for Bangor in 1873, but, judging by known publication dates, most of the music was probably present in the Thoreau household in Concord, and was played and sung during Henry Thoreau's lifetime.¹

The most striking aspect of this collection of music is its popular character. It contains selections such as "Comin' Thro' the Rye," "Ben Bolt," and "The Blue Juniata," which are still familiar. It contains others whose popularity has now faded, but which were, like "Comin' Thro' the Rye," *et al.*, included in almost every nineteenth century songster: "The Brave Old Oak," "The Mother's Farewell," "The Yellow Hair'd Laddie," and "Jessie the Flow'r o' Dumblane." It contains current hits of the day as sung by the Rainer Family, who toured the United

States in the 1840's; and, "By the Sad Sea Wave," performed by the immensely popular Jenny Lind during her tour here in the early 1850's. The only selection of the thirty-nine in the group, which approaches what we would call cultivated music, is a fragment of Mendelssohn's "I would That My Love."

Typical of many of the songs in this collection is "As the Robin When Once Fondly Cherished" (Music by H. R. Bishop and Words by C. Inman):

As the robin when once fondly cherished
Will oft to its shelter return,
Though the one who caressed it hath perish'd
And sleeps in the mouldering urn,
So I love to reseek the sweet hours
Of childhood's soft silken-like sway,
When happiness strew'd with its flowers
The steep of Life's wearisome way...

The picture which emerges from a perusal of such music is that of an ordinary middle-class nineteenth century family - not very different, musically at least, from Mark Twain's Grangerfords.

One piece of this music, however, is not standard parlor-piano fare. There is a song titled, "The Captive's Lament," printed on a page torn from the Ladies' Emancipation Gazette. The burden of the lament is:

My country, my country, how long I for thee,
O'er the mountain, o'er the mountain, far over
the sea!

Using language surely never spoken by any slave, it continues:

O for the breath of our own waving palm,
Here as I languish my spirit to calm;-
O for a draught from our own cooling lake,
Brought by sweet mother my spirit to wake.

The anti-slavery sentiments of the Thoreau are well known. Henry spoke and wrote vehemently against slavery, and the Thoreau women were active in the Concord Women's Anti-slavery Society; Helen Thoreau's death was noted in an abolitionist paper.² It is, therefore, particularly interesting to find in the Thoreau music, along with the abolitionist song, a copy of Stephen Foster's "Nelly Bly." This copy is painstakingly written out by hand.

Carl Bode has noted that Stephen Foster, with his beautiful and appealing songs, made "a classic contribution to the myth of the ante-bellum South. The contented darkies, the kind old massa, and the pillared plantation are standard in his songs. Whether the strain be comic or sad, the moral is that the plantation was a pastoral utopia."³ In the Thoreau parlor, the same voices which sang "The Captive's Lament" also sang one of "Fosters (sic) Ethiopian Melodies as sung by the Christy Minstrels:"⁴

Nelly Bly! Nelly Bly! bring de broom along,
We'll sweep de kitchen clean, my dear, and
hab a little song.
Poke de wood, my lady lub, and make de fire
burn,
And while I take de banjo down, just gib de
mush a turn.

Probably no singer or listener of the period - even New England abolitionists - sensed the contradiction in spirit between these two songs; nor did they consider the implications of both songs having been composed by white people.

We have here a striking example of one of the pervasive ambiguities of ante-bellum America, and we have it in the parlor of Mr. and Mrs. John Thoreau. The Thoreaus subscribed to popular musical taste, and thereby endorsed other mainstream cultural values as well.

The family which played "old time music,"⁵ and the sisters who "made home pleasant with it,"⁶ nurtured the man who, according to Ellery Channing, responded to "precisely the most tender and popular songs."⁷ Much is made of Henry Thoreau's alienation from established society; little note is taken of those aspects of his background and character which place him in sympathy with his fellow Americans. It is well to remember that the Thoreaus, Henry D. Thoreau, and we who read his works, all share much with "the mass of men."

*ACKNOWLEDGMENT. I gratefully acknowledge assistance from personnel of the Princeton Textual Center for The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau, especially Thomas Blanding; and personnel of the Concord Free Public Library, especially Marcia Moss.

NOTES

¹A check-list of this material is forthcoming. The only music known to have belonged to Henry Thoreau himself (two anti-slavery songsters) is in the Concord Antiquarian Society.

²Walter Harding, The Days of Henry Thoreau (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 258.

³Carl Bode, The Anatomy of American Popular Culture 1840-1861 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1959), p. 27

⁴Cover of sheet music for "Nelly Bly," reproduced in Stephen Foster Song Book, ed. Richard Jackson (New York: Dover, 1974), p. 76. "Nelly Bly" appeared in 1849. "The Captive's Lament" was published in 1844, judging by political references on the reverse of the page.

⁵Thoreau: Man of Concord, ed. Walter Harding (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1960), p. 95.

⁶Edward Emerson, Thoreau As Remembered By a Young Friend (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), p. 88.

⁷William Ellery Channing, Thoreau the Poet-Naturalist (Boston: Goodspeed, 1902), p. 41.



11-7-53

MORE ON THE COMPOSITE PORTRAIT OF THOREAU by Fritz Oehlschlaeger

Edward Emerson's 1917 Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend included on the frontispiece a composite portrait of Thoreau as a young man; the portrait was described as "from a sketch supposed to have been made by his sister Sophia Thoreau, redrawn by Henry K. Hannah from a study of the Maxham daquerreotype and other portraits made in Thoreau's later life." Until now this description has been the only source of information concerning the portrait; when Walter Harding and Milton Meltzer reviewed the history of Thoreau's portraits in A Thoreau Profile, they relied on the above description. Now letters in the Collection of Ernest W. Vickers, recently acquired by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, provide more complete information about the portrait, casting further doubt on its authenticity and suggesting how it came to appear in Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend.

The portrait first appeared in George Tolman's Concord: Some of the things to be seen there (Concord: H. L. Whitcomb, 1903). From this volume Ernest Vickers, pioneer Thoreauvian from Ellsworth Station, Ohio, photographed the portrait and sent copies to his correspondents Henry Salt, Walton Ricketson, E. B. Hill, and F. B. Sanborn. It was Vickers who sought to establish the authenticity of

the portrait by writing to George Tolman; Tolman's letter to Vickers of March 12, 1908, is the apparent source of the description of the portrait which appeared in Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend. The section from Tolman's letter paraphrased in the Emerson volume, however, distorts Tolman's opinion concerning the authenticity of the portrait. The published description suggests more strongly than Tolman's full letter that the original portrait was drawn by Sophia Thoreau. Below is the full text of Tolman's letter, which denies the authenticity of the portrait and discusses how it came to be attributed to Sophia:

Concord, Massachusetts

Mr. Ernest W. Vickers
Ellsworth Station. O.

Dear Sir,

The portrait of H. D. Thoreau in Mr. Whitcomb's little guide book of Concord is quite without authority or value. It was, so far as I am able to find out, based upon a sketch in pencil, supposed to have been made up by his sister Sophia, I say "supposed," for the sketch in an unfinished condition was found by accident some ten years ago in a book that had once belonged to her. But she had been dead twenty years before the sketch was found, and there is no evidence whatever that it was her work. If it were, it must have been made very many years earlier even than that. Mr. Hanna, a local artist, copied the sketch, improving it, as he fancied, by comparing it with the three authentic portraits, so that it is hardly a second cousin to the original sketch, which I think was never intended as a likeness of Henry at all. It may perhaps have been meant as a preliminary study for a portrait of her brother John, never completed as such study, for Sophia did paint a portrait of John, which is now in the collection of Concord Antiquarian Society.

The only authentic portraits of Henry are: Rowse's crayon, now in Concord Public Library; the daguerreotype taken for H. G. O. Blake in 1856; and the ambrotype taken (two copies) in 1861. One copy of the ambrotype went to Daniel Ricketson, the other to Sophia Thoreau, who gave it to me personally a little while before her death. I kept it sacredly until about 1892, when I gave it to the Antiquarian Society, who permitted Mr. A. W. Hosmer to photograph the H. G. O. Blake daguerreotype.

I was well acquainted with Thoreau and his family, perhaps better than anyone now living, with the exception of Mr. F. B. Sanborn; and lived for two years in their house, just before and just after the death of his mother. You ask for photographs, postals etc.--I think Miss E. A. Buck, Main Street, Concord, can furnish you all that are on sale.

Yours very truly
George Tolman

March 12, 1908

Letters in the Vickers collection also reveal the process by which Houghton, Mifflin acquired the portrait for Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend. In a March 4, 1917, letter to Vickers, Edwin B. Hill reported sending the photograph to Francis Allen at Houghton, Mifflin, who did not know of its existence. On June 1, 1917, Hill wrote Vickers that Houghton, Mifflin planned "to use this portrait in a volume of reminiscences of Thoreau, by Dr. Emerson"; Hill further requested Vickers to send whatever history of the portrait he had been able to gather. Vickers responded promptly, for on June 24, 1917, Hill sent him a note of thanks; the information which Vickers sent was undoubtedly

gleaned from Tolman's letter. When the book appeared, Hill again wrote his Thoreauvian friend Vickers, summarizing their part in preserving the portrait: "This has been a great Thoreau year. We have that youthful portrait of Thoreau, from George Tolman's 'Concord,' which seems unknown to most persons. You introduced it to me, and I in turn to H. M. Company, and they to Dr. Emerson, who did not know of it. Now you and I seem to be the ones who have preserved it to Thoreau lovers, indirectly." (August 8, 1917).

Despite E. B. Hill's delight, the composite portrait of Thoreau must be regarded with extreme suspicion. As George Tolman pointed out, the attribution of the original sketch to Sophia Thoreau is extremely dubious; moreover, it seems unlikely that the artist's method of composition--drawing on portraits made in 1854, 1856, and 1861--would yield a fair likeness of Thoreau as a young man.



11-6-53

BY WAY OF COHASSET by Mary Gail Fenn

I am always amused by a typically Thoreauvian remark in the opening chapter of Cape Cod. Thoreau and Ellery Channing were in Boston expecting to board the Provincetown steamer when they read a handbill concerning the wreck of the St. John off the coast of Cohasset. The steamer being delayed, "we decided to go by way of Cohasset," Thoreau wrote. Of course he went by way of Cohasset; never would Thoreau fail to improve the occasion, as he would say, to view the disaster and its impact on the community. And so we read the vivid account of his arriving in the little coastal village with its meetinghouse on the green, the large mass grave being dug in the cemetery for some of the shipwreck victims, and the winding road to the shore where the inhabitants were harvesting pieces of the wreck as well as seaweed.

Once part of the town of Hingham but set aside as a separate district in 1770, the Cohasset of today is a pleasant surprise to the Thoreauvian following the Concord pair on their Cape Cod excursion. Although a south shore suburb of Boston, Cohasset has kept the charm of a small New England village. The town is proud that Captain John Smith was the first European explorer to enter its harbor in 1614. To Smith we are indebted for having recorded the Indian name of the area, Quonahassit, meaning a long place of rocks. "This is said to be the rockiest shore in Massachusetts, from Nantasket to Scituate.... It has been the scene of many a shipwreck," wrote Thoreau.

Arriving in the center we see the common with the same 1747 meetinghouse to which the wagons were headed with their cargo of caskets when Thoreau was there. A short distance beyond the common to the north is the Central Burying Ground, a long narrow cemetery running up and down over several knolls. On top of the middle knoll is a large Celtic cross with an inscription which reads in part, "...the final resting place of about forty five Irish emigrants from a total of ninety nine who lost their lives on Grampus Ledge off Cohasset October 7, 1848 (*sic*) in the wreck of the Brig St. John from Galway Ireland." Following down the "pleasantly winding and rocky" Jerusalem Road we come to the shore with its view of the Grampus Rocks, those small bare rocky islets scattered just off the coast on one of which the St. John foundered. Two

and a half miles from shore on the outermost rock stands the Minot's Ledge Light. Built in 1860 it stands nearly one hundred feet high, the lower forty of solid masonry belted into the rocks beneath the sea. An earlier light on the spot was washed away in a storm just two years after Thoreau's visit. A lightship served in the interim.

That particular type of seaweed called Irish moss was in its first decade of harvesting when Thoreau observed it being gathered up in haste from where it had been drying in the sun before the imminent arrival of a thunderstorm. At the turn of the century the Cohasset area supplied most of the Irish moss used in this country, excepting that which was imported from Ireland. Today, the harbor master in Scituate tells us, it is still being harvested in the area. It is gathered in early summer, dried, and used medicinally and as a thickening agent in foods.

Continuing south on the shore road past large summer estates, we make a semi-circular bypass of the town and arrive at the harbor, a short distance south of the common. Today a motel and a large restaurant perch on the edge of the water where the British brig safely made port during the storm that wrecked the St. John. Small pleasure craft and fishing boats line the docks and the summer visitors, whose influx swells the native population of 4500, mill about the waterfront.

And so for the traveller of today, as well as those who visited the town in 1849, it is worth the while to go by way of Cohasset.



9-22-53

NOTES AND QUERIES

It seems never to have been noticed before that Emerson in his eulogy for Thoreau said, mistakenly, that Thoreau's ancestors came from the isle of Guernsey. It should of course have been Jersey. Perhaps RWE got his cows mixed.

When the Greenwich, Ct. MIDNIGHT GLOBE (Sept. 20, 1977) showed a local lumber dealer Thoreau's list of materials used in building his Walden cabin and costing him \$28.12½, they estimated their present day replacement cost at approximately \$2,000.

The query in bulletin 141 as to where Thoreau said, "What wealth it is to have such friends that we cannot think of them without elevation," has been answered by Karen Houglum. It can be found in his letter to Lidian Emerson of June 20, 1843. . . Caroline Moseley points out that when we cited in the same bulletin John Cage quoting Thoreau as saying "Music is continuous; only listening is intermittent." he was misquoting, for Thoreau said, "But music is perpetual, and only hearing is intermittent." (J, IX, 245). . . And Anne McGrath answers the summer bulletin query about Thoreau's reference to "Daughter of Zion" that it is from Handel's oratorio "Jephtha."

Concord Free Public Library's Joyce Woodman calls our attention to an advertisement she found in the LOWELL JOURNAL for April 5, 1844:

CHARLES W. RICE,
COMMISSION MERCHANT,
MACON AND GRIFFIN, GEORGIA,

Offers his services for the sale of Shoes, Hats, Clothing,
Straw Goods, and all Northern Manufactures that
are consumed at the South. He will also at-
tend to the sale of all species of Northern
Produce, and the purchase of Cotton.

---REFERS TO---

D. S. Richardson, Esq., } Lowell.
Mr George B. Coffin, }
David Henry Thoreau, Concord.

feb16/60m

Charles W. Rice was a classmate of Thoreau's at Harvard who eventually settled in Georgia. He died

there of bilious fever August 9, 1844: The ad ran in the JOURNAL from Feb. 16 to Aug. 23, 1844.

The Henry D. Thoreau School of Wilderness Studies at Eastern Connecticut State College in Willimantic, Conn. (J. Parker Huber, director) is conducting a field trip course on Thoreau's CAPE COD this winter semester. It will also conduct one on Thoreau's MAINE WOODS in August.

The Old Tavern in Grafton, Vermont, announces on its menu that they once played host to Henry David Thoreau.

When Harry DePuy of Henrietta, New York, announced his candidacy for town supervisor, he said he would burn Thoreau in effigy on election eve as a moral lesson to his constituents because Thoreau always refused to vote.

There is talk of dismantling the Hall of Fame in the Bronx because of lack of funds to maintain it. It includes Malvina Hoffman's bust of Thoreau placed there with much ceremony in 1962.

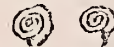
A new housing development in Dobbs Ferry, New York, is called "Walden Wood." Houses run from \$65,000 to \$89,000. Any space for a \$28.12½ cabin?

According to Arthur and Barbara Gelb's O'NEILL (p.459) a slumming party was visiting one of the New York dives frequently by O'NEILL, and one of the women remarked, "Isn't it terrible, these foreign anarchists here," at which one of O'Neill's drunken chronicles shouted at her, "Foreign anarchists? Don't you know America has poisoned the whole world with anarchy? Thoreau! The Oneida Com-unity! You are a constipated school teacher."

RCA Records now distribute recordings by the "Walden West Rhythm Section."

Lukas Foss has recently composed an "American Cantata" using words of Whitman and Thoreau. It was premiered by the New York Philharmonic on Dec. 1, 1977.

A Gill Fox syndicated cartoon of Dec. 9, 1977 shows a patient telling his psychiatrist, "Lately, I'm leading a life of quieter desperation, thanks to your tranquilizers." . . . And a Thaves "Frank & Ernest" syndicated cartoon of Oct. 6, 1977 shows a man blasting forth on a bagpipe and saying, "I've decided to stop leading a life of quiet resignation." . . . BOY'S LIFE for September, 1977, includes a cartoon story on Thoreau.



11-19-53

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . WH Adams, Thomas Boylston. "A Passage to India."

BOSTON HERALD AMERICAN. Nov. 3, 1977. T. and India. Barber, Lee. "Walden--They Come in All Seasons, For All Reasons." CONCORD JOURNAL. Dec. 1, 1977. On visitors to the pond.

Blanding, Thomas. "Beans, Baked and Half-baked (5)", CS (CONCORD SAUNTERER), 12 (Fall, 1977), 19-22 On T. & wild apples and a new T. letter of March 31, 1861.

----- "A last Word from Thoreau." CS, 11 (Winter, 1976), 16-17.

Blasing, Mutlu Konuk. "The Economies of WALDEN" in THE ART OF LIFE: STUDIES IN AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE. Austin: Univ. of Tex. Press, 1977. pp. 1-24. Mrs. Blasing approaches WALDEN as primarily autobiography, a form which she sees as peculiarly American. A very difficult book, at times giving great insights into Thoreau, on other occasions very murky and obscure. When she concerns herself with Thoreau's artistry--that is, Thoreau as conscious artist--I am not convinced. But when she concerns herself with Thoreau as a human being, I find her rewarding. Her discussion

- of Thoreau as Narcissus and as a self-observer I find particularly enlightening. It is a book I believe I'll want to return to a number of times and I expect to find it more rewarding on each reading.
- BOSTON GLOVE. "The Thoreau House, Prince Street" in *AMER. TRANS. QUART.*, 36 (1977), 16. Reprint.
- Buell, Lawrence, "Emerson, Thoreau & Transcendentalism" James Woodress, ed. *American Literary Scholarship*: 1975 Durham, Duke Univ. Press, 1977, pp. 3-15. A bibliographical essay!
- Carter, Everett. "Thoreau" in *THE AMERICAN IDEA: THE LITERARY RESPONSE TO AMERICAN OPTIMISM*. Chapel Hill: U. of N.C. Press, 1977. pp. 93-109.
- Cameron, Kenneth W. "Association or Presentation Copies of Thoreau's Books," *ATQ*, (*AMER. TRANSCENDENTAL QUART.*) 36, (1977), 80-81.
- "Loyalty to Emerson, Thoreau and Transcendentalism at Harvard in 1854-1855." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 51-60. Reprints articles from *HARVARD MAGAZINE*.
- "More Ungathered or Migrant Thoreau Manuscripts." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 82-3.
- "Thoreau's Lecture on 'Misspent Lives' and the Evolution of 'Life without Principle.'" *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 75-9.
- CONCORD JOURNAL. "Thoreau Survey Map." Sept. 29, 1977. Announces the gift to Concord Free Public Library of a Thoreau survey.
- Cone, Edwin. *EXCURSIONS*. New York: Broude, n.d. Words by Thoreau set to music.
- Eaton, Wyatt. "Recollections of American Poets." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 1-9s.
- Garber, Frederick. *THOREAU'S REDEPTIVE IMAGINATION*. New York: N.Y.U. Press, 1977. 229pp. According to the jacket blurb, Garber "identifies and examines Thoreau's essentially Romantic belief in the transformation of nature into consciousness as a redemptive act, redemptive both for nature and for the human self." However I have now read it twice and must admit that I still don't know what the book is all about. It may be my own thick-headedness, but I find it the most obtuse book on Thoreau I've ever read, and when I discussed the book with another Thoreau scholar, I found he agreed with me.
- Golemba, Henry L. *GEORGE RIPLEY*. Boston: Twayne, 1977. 172pp. A brief, thoughtful biography of the leader of Brook Farm. Its strong points include a very cogent summary of the Transcendental-Unitarian controversy, one of the best brief summaries of Brook Farm itself that I have seen, and an excellent evaluation of Ripley as a literary critic. Unfortunately Golemba is often a little too glib in his generalizations, sometimes careless in his facts or proofreading (Curtis did not write her book on Brook Farm before 1812; G.W. Curtis was an editor of *HARPER'S*, not the *ATLANTIC*, etc.), and he has a tendency for infelicity of phrase (for example, "In the last years of his life this seventy-six-year-old man. . .").
- Hawthorne, Sophia. "A Sophia Hawthorne Journal. 1843-1844." *NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE JOURNAL*, 1974, 1-30. Numerous references to T.
- Hedquest, Wendy. "Modern Thoreaus at a Midlands Pond." *WORLD HERALD MAGAZINE OF THE MIDLANDS* (Omaha, Neb.). Aug. 14, 1977. On teaching *WALDEN*.
- Hendrick, George. "Henry S. Salt and the Late Victorian Socialists, and Thoreau." *NEW ENG. Q.*, 50 (Sept. 1977), 409-422. Corrects many errors in the usual accounts of British turn-of-the-century interest in T.
- "Recollections of Concord and the Thoreaus: Letters of Horace Hosmer to Dr. S.A. Jones." *CS*, 12 (Fall, 1977), 1-4.
- Hosmer, Horace. *REMEMBRANCES OF CONCORD AND THE THOREAUS: LETTERS OF HORACE HOSMER TO DR. S.A. JONES*. Edited by George Hendrick. Urbana: Univ. of Ill. Press, 1977. 200pp. Horace Hosmer of Acton was a lifelong friend of Thoreau; Jones, of Ann Arbor, Mich., one of the pioneer Thoreau scholars. These 41 letters written in the 1890's just recently uncovered by Hendrick make an absolutely delightful volume, presenting one of the best informal portraits of Thoreau and the Concord of his day that I have seen. We see Thoreau in the schoolroom, at times surprisingly austere: he rarely spoke to his pupils outside of school; we see him at Walden. We meet Mrs. Thoreau and find her warm and loving but not to be trifled with (a farmer who brought her bloody milk got the tongue-lashing of his life). We see a Concord of surprising violence--murders, suicides, etc. We meet Thoreau's 'rascal' friends Goodwin, etc. and learn that Jenny Dugan was eventually murdered by her daughter-in-law. We see Ellery Channing as "mean and unsocial . . . the most miserable cuss I ever saw." We find that many Concord people thought of Thoreau at Walden "as a second John the Baptist with the Baptist left out." This is the most personable glimpse of Thoreau since Edward Emerson's 1917 *HENRY THOREAU AS REMEMBERED BY A YOUNG FRIEND*. Don't miss it.
- Jamison, Michael. "WALDEN'S DISTANT SHORE." *New Horizons*, I (Jan. 1978), 8-9. On Thoreau and winter. You may receive a complementary copy of this issue by writing to 202 W. Division St., Ishpeming, Mich. 49849 and identifying yourself as a Thoreau Society Member.
- Kasegawa, Koh. "Father Mapple & Captain Brown." *EIGO SEINEN* (Japan), 123 (Sept. 1977), 277.
- Kennedy, William Sloane. "Concord Recollections." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 43-45.
- King, Isabella. "A Harvard Review of Thoreau's EARLY SPRING IN MASS." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 74.
- Lebeaux, Richard. *YOUNG HENRY THOREAU*. Review: *CS*, 12 (Fall, 1977), 14-16.
- LeClaire, Anne. "Henry's Advice Outdated." *CAPE COD TIMES*. Nov. 19, 1977. An amusing column on the tribulations of living the Thoreauvian simple life today.
- McKay, George Frederick. *SUMMER*. Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Presser, n.d. Thoreau's words set to music.
- Meyer, Michael. *SEVERAL MORE LIVES TO LIVE*. Review: *CS*, 12 (Fall, 1977), 10-13.
- Moller, Mary Elkins. "'You Must First Have Lived': Thoreau and the Problem of Death." *ESQ*, 23 (1977)
- Munroe, Alfred. "Thoreau's Schoolmate Remembers Concord," *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 10-38.
- OUTLOOK, "Reminiscences of Thoreau." *ATQ*, 36 (1977), 35-38s, Reprint.
- Rees, John O. "Et in Arcadia Thoreau," *ESQ*, 23 (1977), 240-3. Annotating a line in *WALDEN*.
- Sayre, Robert F. *THOREAU AND THE AMERICAN INDIANS*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977. 239pp. This book is concerned primarily with Thoreau's changing attitude toward the American Indian, from seeing him first as the stereotyped savage to a growing awareness that Indians, like whites, are individuals and human beings, these changing views most notably displayed in Thoreau's reports of his three separate trips to the Maine Woods and his relationships with his Indian guides on those trips. Particularly of interest to the scholar is Sayre's section on Thoreau's Indian notebooks and on his proposed book on the Indian. His chronology of the notebooks is particularly

enlightening.) Sayre demonstrates that while Thoreau perhaps thought a good deal of writing such a book, he never seriously embarked on such a project and kept taking notes on the Indians long after he had clearly abandoned any such project--taking the notes apparently simply because he enjoyed reading about Indians. In discussing Thoreau's comments on Indians in his published works, Sayre is best on MAINE WOODS. While he has interesting comments to make about WALDEN and A WEEK, there he tends to ride his thesis a bit much and sees more emphasis on the Indian in those books than I believe Thoreau intended. Particularly of interest is the first publication of the only known photograph of Thoreau's guide Joe Aitteon. This book is the most comprehensive study of Thoreau and the Indian yet and thus a real boon to scholars.

- "Autobiography and Images of Utopia." SALAMAGUNDI, 19 (Sept. 1972), 18-37. Includes a section on WALDEN.
- Sharp, William. "Fascinating Henry Thoreau," ATO, 36 (1977), 9. Reprint.
- Thoreau, Henry David. A DESOBEDIENCIA CIVIL. Lisboa: Estudios Cor, 1977. 100pp. Trans. into Portuguese.
- The Same. Review: BROTERIA, 105 (Oct. 1977), 350.
- ON THE DUTY OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. Intro by Gene Sharp. London: Housmans, 1976. 23pp. Reprint of 1963 edition.
- THE ILLUSTRATED MAINE WOODS. Edited by Joseph Moldenhauer, with photographs from the Gleason collection. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977. 347pp. This superb edition now available in a paperback.
- Thorpe, James. THOREAU'S WALDEN. San Marino, Cal.: Huntington Library, 1977. 24pp. A gem of a pamphlet that captures both the humanity and the sturdiness of Thoreau and his ideas. It is filled with many little-known but delightful quotations extracted from the unpublished Thoreau manuscripts in the Huntington and charmingly illustrated with other Thoreau treasures from the Huntington. Don't miss it.
- "Walden, Monday Aug. 4th 1879." Reproduction of an unsigned charcoal sketch in Concord Free Public Library.
- Wesolowski, David. "Henry Thoreau." VEGETARIAN TIMES. Nov. 1977. p. 39.
- Whear, Paul W. FROM THOREAU. Champaign, Ill.: Media Press, n.d. Words from Thoreau set to music.
- Whitmore, George. "Friendship in New England: Henry Thoreau." GAI SABER (Box 480, Lenon Hill Station, New York City, NY 10021), I (Summer, 1977), 104-111. First part of a study of homosexuality in Thoreau.
- Williams Paul O. "Hoing in the Dew: An Aspect of Thoreau's Transcendental Farming." CS, 12 (Fall, 1977), 17-18.
- Witherell, Elizabeth. "An Editor's Nightmare: 'It Is No Dream of Mine' in the Princeton Edition of Thoreau's Poetry." CS, 12 (Fall, 1977), 5-9.
- Wolf, William J. "Thoreau as Ecological Theologian Today" in FREEDOM'S HOLY LIGHT. Wakefield, Mass: Parameter Press, 1977. pp. 62-92. On Thoreau as a mystic, a social critic and an ecologist.

We are indebted to the following for information sent in for this bulletin: L. Beaulieu, W. Bottorff, J. Burke (for the musical items), M. Campbell, J. Donovan, R. Epler, F. Fenn, H. Gottschalk, J. Grant, G. Hannon, G. Hasenauer, W. Heath, K. Hougum, W. Howarth, E. Hunsaker, J. Inners, E. Johnson, D. Kamen-Kay, G. Kerfoot, W. Kreiger, C. Lang, G. Montiero, R. Needham,

A. Small, W. Sutton, J. Thorpe, and J. Vickers. Please keep your secretary informed of items he has missed and new items as they appear.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Chester G. Atkins, Massachusetts' youngest state senator, recently discovered the first Blanding's turtle to be found in Massachusetts since Thoreau recorded in his journal discovering one.

New life members of the Thoreau Society are Dr. Paul Dinsmore of Concord, Mass. and Mrs. Roland Robbins of Lincoln, Mass. Life membership in the Thoreau Society is one hundred dollars.

The Aug. 7, 1977 NEW YORK TIMES includes a Barney Tohey cartoon showing parents trying to persuade their children to climb down a sand dune, saying, "If the Indians, the puritans and Thoreau could take this walk down to the beach, so can you two!"

Darqis Associates, 9520 Gerwig Lane, Columbia, Md. have recently issued a beautiful photographic poster featuring Thoreau's "Only that day dawns to which we are awake." C.M. Paula Co., Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 sell a mounted motto with Thoreau's "The most I can do for my friend...." Hallmark Cards have issued cards with Thoreau's "The language of friendship is not words but meaning" and "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads."

George Hannon of Rollinsford, N.H. keeps his local newspaper supplied with favorite quotations from Thoreau and they use them regularly for fillers.

We have known of a number of weddings at Walden Pond, but recently we learned that a local Mormon family baptized their son in Walden.

The Canadian Broadcasting Company's documentary on Thoreau of several years back has recently been shown in Switzerland and Italy with Italian dubbed in.

9-22-53

A CONFERENCE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND THE LITERARY ARTIST: A CASE STUDY OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU
State University College Geneseo, N.Y. 14454

Papers by Raymond Gozzi on a Freudian approach to Thoreau; by Richard Lebeaux on an Eriksonian approach; by Everett Ferguson on testing Thoreau by proxy; by Paul Hourihan on "Civil Disobedience" as Thoreau's revolt against Emerson; by James Armstrong on Thoreau, chastity and contemporary reformers, by Walter Harding on Thoreau and eros; and by Norman Holland summing up the conference. There will also be a Thoreau exhibition in Milne Library, a Thoreau musicale, and a performance by Christopher Childs of his "Clear Sky, Pure Light: An Evening with Thoreau."

The public is invited. For dinner and motel reservations, write Walter Harding at Geneseo.

This conference is sponsored by the Conversations in the Disciplines Program of the State University of New York.

According to the Exeter, N.H. NEWSLETTER for June 9, 1977, a clerk in a bookstore was heard saying, "You wanted something guaranteed to put you to sleep at night," pointing to a copy of WALDEN, "That's the most boring."

A preserve on the outskirts of Boulder, Col., is named "Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat."

Darqis Associates (see above) also issue a "different drummer" poster by one Robert Singleterry. IBM has a Thoreau poster quoting "Our horizon is never quite at our elbows."